NOTE XIX.

WHAT ABOUT THE JAVAN BEAR?

BY

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The other day I read in a dutch popular periodical a paper dealing with the different species of Bears and their geographical distribution. To my great surprise the Malayan Bear was mentioned from Java: the locality Java being quite new to me I wrote to the author of that paper and asked him some informations about the matter: he referred me to Brehm's »Tierleben" and Flower and Lydekker's »Mammals."

Indeed on p. 245 of Brehm's Tierleben, Säugethiere, zweiter Band, 1890, Dr. Pechuel Loesche stated: »der Biruang (*Ursus malayanus*) bewohnt Borneo, *Java*, Sumatra, die Malayische Halbinsel und verbreitet sich nordwärts durch Tenasserim bis nach Burma und durch Arakan bis nach Tschittagong"; and in Flower and Lydekker's Mammals, 1891, p. 559, the geographical distribution of the Malay Bear or Sun Bear (*Ursus malayanus*) runs as follows: »this small species inhabits the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, *Java*, Borneo, Tenasserim, Arakan, Chittagong and the Garo hills of India."

Scrutinizing what has been published concerning the geographical distribution of the Malay Bear I see that there are more authors who believe that in the island of Java is living a Bear. I only have to remember the opinion of the following authors.

1829. J. B. Fischer. Synopsis Mammalium, p. 145: »In insulis archipelagi Indici (Sumatra, Borneo, *Java*) et in peninsula Malacca."

1863. E. Blyth. Catalogue of the Mammalia in the Museum Asiatic Society, p. 77: »Hab. Arakan; Indo-Chinese countries generally; Malayan peninsula, Sumatra, *Java* and Borneo."

1866. A. Murray. The geographical distribution of Mammals, p.p. 382, 383: »Borneo, Sumatra and *Java*." [1])

1869. J. E. Gray. Catalogue of Carnivorous, Pachydermatous and Edentate Mammalia in the British Museum, p. 235: »Hab. Malayan islands — Sumatra, Borneo, *Java*; Malay peninsula."

1888—91. W. T. Blanford. The Fauna of British India, Mammalia, p. 199: »This bear inhabits the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, *Java* and Borneo, and extends northwards into Tenasserim, Arakan, Chittagong, and the Garo hills."

1891. W. L. Sclater. Catalogue of Mammalia in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, p. 304: »Garo Hills, Assam, Chittagong, Arakan, Tenasserim, Malay Peninsula (Cantor), Sumatra, *Java* and Borneo (Temminck)."

1894. Carl Grevé. Die geographische Verbreitung der jetzt lebenden Raubthiere. Nova acta der Ksl. Leop.-Carol. Deutschen Akademie der Naturforscher, Bd. LXIII, N°. 1, p. 243: »der Verbreitungsbezirk des malayischen Bären ist ein verhältnissmässig beschränkter. Die Halbinsel Malacca, Hinterindien, vor allen Dingen die Landschaften Tschittagong, Arakan, Tenasserim, Birma, die Garohügel und das Terai bilden auf dem Festlande — unter den Inseln Borneo, Celebes [2]), Sumatra, *Java* und Banka, Palawan,

1) Murray mentions as *chief authority* »Müller's Verhandlungen, 1835" (lege Verhandelingen, 1839—44)! This is incorrect; Müller said l. c. p. 32: that the Malay Bear is distributed over Sumatra, Borneo and Malacca.

2) I do not know from where Dr. Grevé has his informations or in what collection he saw specimens from all those small islands; he is responsible;

Tambelan, Gross-Natuna, Labuan, Balabak, Calamyanes, Cuyo, Cogayan, Sulu, Sibutu, Solombo und Paternoster-Inseln seine Heimath."

1897. E. L. TROUESSART. Catalogus Mammalium tam viventium quam fossilium, fasciculus II, p. 244: »Indo-China, ? Birma, Pegu, Arakan, Chittagon, Garo Hills, Tenasserim, Malacca, Sumatra, *Java*, Borneo."

The principal question now arises: »on what typical Java-specimens has been based the above cited locality *Java*; where are specimens from that locality stored up in Musea as »documents"? And the answer is, that according to Blyth's Catalogue, 1863, and Sclater's Catalogue, 1891, there is in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, a skin of a specimen from Java, presented by Captain Scholefield. We find the history relating this specimen in J. A. S. B. Vol. XVII, 1848, part I, p. 250: »the curator Zoological Department reported that Capt. Scholefield, of the Schooner »Sydney", presented a dead female *Ursus malayanus*, from Java. Perfectly identical, as a species, with specimens from Assam, Tenasserim, a. s. o.; but the individual remarkable for two great black patches occupying much of the right side of its V-like mark on the chest, and for numerous small spots [1]) over the remainder of the same mark. It has been set up as a stuffed specimen." That is all! Now a Captain of a Schooner generally spoken is not a naturalist, sothat he could not know that Java was an erroneous locality for a Bear, but it is very strikingly that all naturalists have accepted that locality without comment and without a trace of hesitation.

Still more inexplicable is the following: according to Gray's Catologue, 1869, p. 235, he has compared the skull of a

but nobody has seen of heard about the existence of a Bear in *Celebes*! I find this fictive locality too in Giebel's Säugethiere, 1855, p. 744.

1) In the Leyden Museum there is a very adult stuffed female (Catalogue 1892, p. 151, N°. *e*) from Borneo in which the white V-shaped patch or mark on the chest also is adorned with numerous small black spots.

Bear from Borneo with the skulls of *Javan specimens*! For he wrote verbatim: »but perhaps the Bornean specimen »may be found to have a rather larger tubercular grinder »which is more contracted behind than in the *Javan spe-*»*cimens.*" One of the officers of the British Museum however kindly told me by letter d. d. May 26th 1898 in reply on my request: »I beg to inform you that we have »in our collection the skin of a bear labelled *Helarctos* »*malayanus* from Sumatra. The specimen is mentioned in »Gray's List of specimens of Mammalia in B. M. 1843, »p. 73. This appears to be the only bear from that region »which we have in the collection." Gray's Javan specimens not having been seen by other naturalists and nobody knowing the way by which they arrived in the Museum and by which they have disappeared, the proof that bears have been brought over from Java is entirely failing!

It is a since long well-known fact that neither naturalists nor dutch inhabitants of Java have seen there a Bear; contrariwise they all unanimously related that in the island of Java the Bear is *not* to be found.

In the Leyden Museum are specimens from Sumatra and Borneo, moreover a specimen said to come from Banka; I cannot ascertain that the Bear truly is living in Banka, however the geographical position of that island, rather close to Sumatra, indicates the possibility, and — the Bear is a very good swimmer.

To conclude we may accept as well established facts that *Ursus malayanus* is living in Sumatra and Borneo, probably in Banka, but most certainly not in Java, Celebes or smaller Malayan islands.